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SUBJECT: ANDEAN ORGANIZATIONS TELL THEIR STORY AT THE 2ND MEETING OF THE INITIATIVE FOR CONSERVATION IN THE ANDEAN AMAZON

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11. SUMMARY. The USAID-funded Initiative for Conservation of the Andean Amazon (ICAA) brought together 75 participants for the Second ICAA Partners Meeting, held in Quito, Ecuador from May 18-23, 2008. ICAA is a five year program (2006-2011) based in the Amazon regions of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru to build constituencies and local capacity for sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity and environmental services. The ICAA program promotes a regional vision of conservation and economic development by strengthening environmental management, enhancing participative planning, developing conservation alliances with the private sector, and improving the use of valuable natural resources.

12. Ecuadorian Ministers Marcela Aguinaga (Ministry of the Environment) and Veronica Sion (Ministry of Tourism) and USAID Mission Director Alexandria Panehal welcomed the group to Ecuador. The workshop included lectures, meetings, roundtables, training courses, and a field trip to the Cayambe-Coca Ecological Reserve and Kichwa communities in the upper Amazon watershed. Meeting participants included ICAA's twenty partner organizations, USAID staff from the four program Missions and the Latin American and Caribbean Bureau, and the State Department Regional Environmental Hub office (Brasilia). END SUMMARY.

SETTING THE CONTEXT: CONSERVATION IN THE ANDEAN AMAZON

13. The Andean Amazon is the most biologically diverse region in the world, providing critical environmental services for the planet. It is rich with current and potential resources, and is home to hundreds of indigenous communities with centuries of traditional

knowledge in the use of these unique resources. Deforestation, unsustainable farming, mining, and poorly planned infrastructure projects damage the region's biodiversity and livelihoods of local peoples, resulting in environmental costs for the entire world. However, a growing awareness of the role that natural resources play in sound development provides a strategic opportunity to address these threats. NOTE: Andean Amazon is defined as the Amazon Basin portions of the Andean countries Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. END NOTE.

¶4. According to a recent report by the Andean Community entitled 'Climate Change has no borders' (CAN: El Cambio Climático no tiene fronteras), the Andean Amazon countries will lose a significant amount of their GDP to climate change by the year 2025: Bolivia, 7.3%; Colombia, 4.5%; Ecuador, 6.2%; and Peru, 4.4%. ICAA's Support Unit plans a meeting on Climate Change and the Andean Amazon during the first trimester of 2009 to share information on social and environmental adaptation, mitigation, and case studies. State Department's Environmental Hub Office will sponsor a workshop on Andean glacier melt related to climate change in January 2009.

¶5. In most of the Andean Amazon countries, disputes for land tenure rights often create conflicts which impede conservation efforts. Although indigenous territories account for more land coverage than traditional protected areas (e.g., national parks and reserves), many indigenous lands overlap with proposed or active hydrocarbon exploration lots and/or logging activities. These and other dynamics generate frequent conflicts, environmental and human health hazards, rapid social change, and tenure disputes. Furthermore, indigenous agencies in most regional governments are lower-level offices with insufficient resources and political power to adequately manage such issues.

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¶6. The mega-infrastructure development project for South America, IIRSA, is a shared concern for ICAA partner organizations. The following are some of the IIRSA projects that will directly affect ICAA projects: Interoceanic Sur (road and rail projects in Peru and Bolivia); Pucallpa-Cruzeiro do Sul (energy integration in Brazil and Peru); hydroelectric plant Coca-Codo-Sinclair (Ecuador); Northern Corridor Bolivia (roads); Manta-Manaus highway (Ecuador, Peru, Brazil); hydrocarbon extraction in Peru (Lote 107); and hydrocarbon extraction in the Bahuaja-Sonene National Park (Madre de Dios, Peru). ICAA partners will participate in a September 2008 event sponsored by Conservation International, WWF, and BICECA to discuss the impact of infrastructure projects in the Amazon, the second such co-sponsored effort with ICAA.

ICAA ACTIVITIES: ORGANIZATION, CONSORTIA, PROGRAM AREAS

¶7. ICAA consists of four field-based consortia and a Support Unit that assists USAID with program management. The 4 ICAA consortia include 20 implementing partners of NGOs, universities, indigenous and local organizations, government agencies, and research organizations. ICAA is managed by USAID staff in Washington and a region-wide USAID Amazon working group consisting of representatives from Missions in all four program countries (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia). ICAA collaborates closely with the bilateral USAID/Brazil Amazon conservation activities and DOS Regional Environmental Hub Office (Brasilia).

¶8. The four ICAA field consortia focus on building local capacity for conservation. The four consortia are: 1) Sustainable Livelihoods; 2) Indigenous Landscapes; 3) Madidi-Manu Conservation Corridor; and 4) Environmental Management in the Madre de Dios-Pando Region. USAID will allocate another four million dollars for a fifth consortium, which will be selected by October, 2008.

¶9. The Sustainable Livelihoods consortium works with sustainable coffee, cocoa, forest production, and tourism. The consortium aims to increase the number of areas in the Andean Amazon region under good management, especially those areas located near fragile ecosystems. The group also aims to increase sales and cost competitiveness of its products. Members of the consortium include the Rainforest Alliance, Fundacion Natura Colombia, and Conservacion

y Desarrollo (Ecuador).

¶10. The Indigenous Landscapes consortium is led by the Nature Conservancy (Ecuador and Peru), Instituto Bien Comun (Peru), and Fundacion para la Sobrevivencia del Pueblo Cofan (Ecuador). The consortium supports indigenous groups to define, protect and manage indigenous territories in Peru and Ecuador, strengthen the organizational and financial sustainability of indigenous organizations, and build regional indigenous capacity for outreach and collaboration. Working closely with government agencies, the consortium addresses infrastructure, land tenure and other issues related to indigenous lands, including proposed new reserves to protect isolated indigenous peoples. NOTE: See recent photos and news regarding an isolated indigenous group in the Peru-Brazil border area on BBC and Survival International web pages. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/742_6794.stm and <http://www.survival-international.org> END NOTE

¶11. The Madidi-Manu Conservation Corridor group includes the Wildlife Conservation Society, Amazon Conservation Association (Peru and Bolivia), Fundacion PUMA (Bolivia), Fondo de las Americas

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(Peru), and Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental (SPDA). The consortium focuses on protected area management, capacity-building for government agencies, local communities and indigenous groups, and landscape-level planning within the corridor region between Madidi National Park (Bolivia) and Manu National Park (Peru).

¶12. The Madre de Dios-Pando Consortium seeks to strengthen environmental management and local institutions in these regions of Peru and Bolivia. Program areas include building environmental awareness and knowledge through universities and schools, and developing road impact mitigation plans with local government for the Interoceanic and other highways. The consortium also intends to develop watershed management plans for the Tahuamanu and Abuna rivers. The consortium is comprised of the following groups: University of Florida, Universidad Amazonica de Madre de Dios (UNAMAD-Peru), Proyecto Especial Madre de Dios (Peru), Woods Hole Research Center, Bolivian NGO Herencia and Universidad Amazonica de Pando (UAP-Bolivia). NOTE: As part of the USAID/Brazil bilateral program, the Brazil Mission supports complementary technical cooperation activities focusing on development of participatory environmental management plans with government agencies and civil society in the Acre river watershed area and related Acre state road corridors. END NOTE.

¶13. The Support Unit for ICAA constitutes the fifth consortium and includes International Resources Group, Peruvian NGO SPDA, Academy for Educational Development, Conservation Strategy Fund, and Social Impact. The Support Unit assists USAID in managing ICAA programs through reporting and communications, training and capacity building, performance monitoring, small grants, public-private partnerships, and cross-cutting working groups on infrastructure and territorial management.

MEETING RESULTS: STRENGTHENED COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

¶14. During the week-long ICAA workshop entitled, "Telling our Story," participants heard from ICAA partners, as well as an invited panel of recognized Amazonian specialists including: Rosalia Arteaga, ex-General Director of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, former Vice President of Ecuador, and current Executive Director of the NGO Fundacion Natura Regional for Ecuador and Colombia; Jacob Olander, carbon markets expert and Executive Director of the environmental consulting firm EcoDecision; and Trevor Stevenson, Co-Director of the NGO Amazon Alliance. These specialists conveyed the importance of globalization and regional politics, and biodiversity-related markets (e.g., carbon, tourism, certified agricultural products, environmental services), and the importance of integrating the voices of indigenous groups in shaping policy and adaptive measures to climate change.

¶15. This 2nd Meeting of ICAA offered Consortium representatives capacity-building courses on a range of issues including: innovative financial mechanisms for conservation; communication instruments;

Rainforest Alliance and Smart Voyager certification standards; informal alert system for climate change in the southwestern Amazon; guaranteeing land-tenure in indigenous lands; payment for ecosystem services; participatory mapping of indigenous lands; actions to influence and improve public policies; gender and sustainability.

¶16. Meeting results also included region-wide information sharing, discussion of improved technical workplans and results frameworks, strengthened collaboration within and across ICAA consortia of

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implementing partners, new skills for private sector conservation alliances, communication, participatory mapping, and environmental advocacy. Partners and USAID Missions agreed to new targets and formats for a forthcoming annual Amazon-wide report of USAID conservation activities and program-wide indicators for enhanced communication and Congressional reporting. Participants further refined their common vision and their united team approach for Amazonian conservation.

¶17. Future capacity-building courses are planned to include a Cost-Benefit Analysis of Infrastructure Projects, and an Exchange of Experience within Indigenous Communities. A long-distance learning packet is being prepared that will include instructions for training-the-trainer on central issues such as IIRSA, biofuels, climate change, etc.

SMALL GRANTS

¶18. USAID announced a competitive small-grants program within ICAA, which will allocate a total of USD 600,000 to indigenous communities and organizations in the Andean Amazon region (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia). Projects will receive between USD 5,000 and 50,000 and must present innovative conservation initiatives that strengthen the technical and organizational capacities of indigenous communities. Only non-US organizations currently not receiving ICAA funding will be eligible. Call for projects will commence in late June/early July 2008.

NEXT STEPS

¶19. The Third ICAA Partners' Meeting is tentatively planned for March, 2009 in Bolivia. In the meantime, consortia members will work to reach measurable indicators, which can be presented to the US congress: 1) number of hectares under improved management; 2) number of hectares of biologically-significant areas under improved management; 3) number of participants trained; 4) PLAR (policies, laws, agreements, and regulations) implemented; 5) Number of co-sponsored political dialogues carried out; and 6) resources leveraged. Other next steps include the forthcoming USAID call for proposals for a new ICAA consortium, the small grants program launch, public launch of the ICAA website, and a capacity building course in cost-benefit analysis of infrastructure projects.

¶20. COMMENTS: Although ICAA is composed of highly-experienced and competent organizations from the Andean Amazon region, it is still evident that working at a regional level is a challenge, especially with the current tension between Colombia and Ecuador and with the Government of Bolivia threatening to suspend all international cooperation programs. ICAA offers a unique and timely opportunity for USAID regional and bilateral Mission programs in the Amazon to fulfill an important role in the global responsibility of reducing the impact of climate change. ICAA partners and USAID are committed to the ICAA goal of building local capacity to conserve and manage Amazonian resources, as well as to secure a safe and sustainable future for the people of the region. END COMMENT.

SOBEL